

February 26, 2010

**WASHINGTON, DC** - U.S. Reps. Michael A. Arcuri (NY-24) and Daniel Maffei (NY-25) sent a letter to U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Secretary Ray LaHood yesterday advocating support for additional federal funding for high speed rail development in Central New York and the Mohawk Valley. Arcuri spoke to Secretary LaHood on the phone late Wednesday, and the Secretary offered to meet with the two congressmen in the coming weeks to discuss the matter further.

"High speed rail development represents the Erie Canal like vision our region needs to create jobs and economic activity," **said Arcuri, who spoke with USDOT Secretary LaHood on the phone yesterday regarding high speed rail in Upstate New York.**

"The short term construction jobs coupled with the long term benefits of being able to move people quickly and efficiently around the State is a recipe for economic success. I will continue to work with my Republican and Democratic colleagues from across Upstate New York to secure the investment needed to make high speed rail a reality."

"Thanks to the hard work of the New York delegation, we have gotten the ball rolling- but there is so much more work to do before we can make this dream a reality," **Maffei said.** "The foundation Upstate New York is built on bold investments in infrastructure, and bringing high speed rail to our area is the investment we need to move our area forward. I want to make it clear that I will fight for funding through every possible channel."

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 Consolidated Appropriations Act that was signed into law in December contained an additional \$2.5 billion nationwide for high speed rail development. Similar to the \$8 billion in high speed rail funding that was included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act), USDOT will award these funds under a competitive application process. Both Arcuri and Maffei voted for these measures to ensure Federal funding would be available for critical projects in Upstate New York. In their letter today, the congressmen stressed the critical need for new construction jobs created by local high speed rail projects.

In January, USDOT announced that New York's Empire Corridor would receive \$151 million dollars in Recovery Act funding for high speed rail. As members of the bipartisan Upstate

Congressional Caucus, both Arcuri and Maffei were instrumental in advocating for the inclusion of New York's Empire Corridor, from Niagara Falls to Albany, in the national high speed rail network. The bulk of the Recovery Act funding is to construct a second track between Schenectady and Albany, the most congested section of the line. Travel is regularly delayed as much as a full hour, in this section alone, as trains are currently limited to a single track. While Recovery Act funds will drastically reduce travel times and improve reliability all across Upstate, Arcuri and Maffei are pushing to bring additional federal funding to projects that will also bring construction jobs and further travel time reducing improvements.

The FY2010 Consolidated Appropriations Act also included \$4,595,000, to be used to improve grade crossing safety from Buffalo to Albany. Of these funds, \$1 million are specifically for improvements at crossings in Oneida County (secured by Arcuri) and an additional \$1 million for crossings in Wayne County (secured by Maffei). These projects will enable improved speeds throughout the corridor, thereby reducing travel times and increasing on-time service.

[Click here to view the letter sent by Arcuri and Maffei to Secretary LaHood.](#)